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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000519

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/29/2017
TAGS: [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [SA](#) [SCUL](#) [SOCI](#)
SUBJECT: INSIDE PRINCE KHALED'S DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

REF: JEDDAH 00512

Classified By: Consul General Tatiana Gfoeller for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (S) SUMMARY: During a December 16 meeting with the CG, prominent Jeddah businessman Loay Bougary (strictly protect) described Prince Khaled's development plans for Mecca Province, and gave a detailed account of the consultative cabinet of experts which the prince organized to advise on these plans. The cabinet proposed initiatives addressing twelve issues, including education reform, women's empowerment, managing corruption, and the razing of slums. Selected cabinet participants continue to work on final plans of action, with implementation to begin on each plan in a matter of months. END SUMMARY.

DEVELOPMENT PLANS CONCEIVED IN ASIR, EXPANDED IN MECCA

[¶2.](#) (S) During a December 16 meeting with the CG over lunch, prominent Jeddah real estate businessman Loay Bougary described Prince Khaled's development plans for Mecca Province. Bougary's account updated the description Prince Khaled provided to the CG during her earlier visit to his Jeddah office to congratulate him on assuming the governorship of Mecca Province. These plans constitute an expanded version of the development program that the prince initiated in Asir while governor of that province (reftel).

SOLICITING EXPERTS' ADVICE

[¶3.](#) (S) Bougary received an inside look at Prince Khaled's development plans while participating in a 120-member consultative "kitchen cabinet" organized by the prince. This practice is typical of the Western management innovations favored by Prince Khaled, a known reformer and modernizer who regularly consults with experts as part of his strategic planning.

[¶4.](#) (S) The 120 members of the cabinet were locked up in a Jeddah hotel for five days and nights. During the day, they met in a large auditorium with 12 tables of 10 members each. Bougary stated that the 120 were an ad hoc group, picked individually and personally by the prince for their expertise in an eclectic variety of areas and their independence of spirit. What astonished and pleased Bougary at the same time was the presence of women among the 120. Some tables included members of both genders, though "regrettably," Bougary's did not; "unfortunately, I was seated with some very conservative men who did not want to share our table with women," he explained to the CG.

[¶5.](#) (S) Each table was directed to focus on a topic from a list that included education reform, corruption, women's empowerment, illegal Hajj over-stayers, and the razing of

slums. Bougary was particularly interested in this last issue and had valuable expertise to contribute as he is one of Jeddah's most prominent real estate businessmen. On a personal note, he told the CG that sixty per cent of his native city of Mecca is up for razing and that his family owns a hundred-year-old house in the center of the city which it fears will go under the chopping block. Large swaths of Jeddah's slum neighborhoods will definitely be razed and their illegal ex-Hajji inhabitants deported in the near future, he added.

FINALIZING, THEN IMPLEMENTING

¶16. (S) After five days, the cabinet members submitted their reports and were released. The next week, Prince Khaled invited the forty most impressive participants, including Bougary, to reconvene at an area school. This time, the session lasted only one day and participants sat around one large table chaired by the prince, who charged them with writing up detailed plans of action for each of the twelve topics covered in the first session. Again, women were involved. The completed plans are expected within a matter of months, with implementation to begin on each plan as it is submitted.

¶17. (S) COMMENT: Although the idea of a consultative council is rooted in Islamic tradition (and most prominently exemplified by the Majlis al-Shura that advises King Abdullah), Prince Khaled's use of this leadership model is distinctive for his 30-year track record of embracing the advice of his experts and following through with rigorous implementation plans. If the national debate over whether to expand the role of the King's Majlis al-Shura is taken as a bellwether for Saudi attitudes towards political

JEDDAH 00000519 002 OF 002

liberalization, Prince Khaled's heavily consultative style of governing Mecca Province may represent the forefront of a trend. END COMMENT.
GFOELLER